

Message Text

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WARSAW FOR ARMITAGE

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TAGS: PFOR, EAIR, YO, US

SUBJECT: HIJACKERS SENTENCED

REF: A) BELGRADE 4826 (NOTAL), B) STATE 283019 (NOTAL)

1. NEW YORK TIMES ON JULY 21 FRONT-PAGED FOLLOWING
ARTICLE BY MAX H. SIEGEL UNDER HEADING "CROATIAN
COUPLE GET LIFE TERMS FOR AIR PIRACY":

BEGIN TEXT:

--- TWO MEMBERS OF THE CROATIAN NATIONALISTS WHO HI-
JACKED A TRANS WORLD AIRLINE JET LAST SEPTEMBER 10 WERE
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SENTENCED IN FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT YESTERDAY TO MANDATORY
TERMS OF LIFE IMPRISONMENT FOR AIR PIRACY RESULTING IN
A DEATH.

--- HOWEVER, WHILE THE LEADER, ZVONKO BUSIC, AND HIS
WIFE, JULIENNE, RECEIVED THE SAME SENTENCES, JUDGE JOHN
R. BARTELS RULED THAT MRS. BUSIC BE ELIGIBLE FOR PAROLE

IN EIGHT YEARS, AS OPPOSED TO 10 FOR HER HUSBAND, BECAUSE, HE SAID, SHE WAS A "GENTLE, SYMPATHETIC YOUNG LADY" WHO MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN THE HIJACKING HAD SHE NOT MET HER HUSBAND.

--- THE COUPLE'S THREE ASSOCIATES IN THE HIJACKING, STAGED TO PUBLICIZE DEMANDS FOR CROATIAN INDEPENDENCE, FACE 20 YEARS TO LIFE IN PRISON BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT CONVICTED ON THE FIRST COUNT OF THE INDICTMENT, CHARGING AIR PIRACY RESULTING IN A DEATH. THEY ARE SCHEDULED TO BE SENTENCED IN FEDERAL COURT IN BROOKLYN THIS MORNING....

--- ...BEFORE SENTENCE WAS PRONOUNCED YESTERDAY, MR. BUSIC ADDRESSED THE COURT FOR NEARLY AN HOUR. READING A PREPARED TEXT, HE OUTLINED A LONG LIST OF CROATIAN GRIEVANCES AGAINST YUGOSLAVIA IN EXPLAINING WHY HE CARRIED OUT THE HIJACKING.

--- "I DID NOT DO THIS ACT OUT OF ADVENTURISTIC OR TERRORISTIC IMPULSES," HE SAID. "IT WAS SIMPLY THE SCREAM OF A DISENFRANCHISED AND PERSECUTED MAN."

--- SEVERAL TIMES, HE ALLUDED TO THE DEATH OF OFFICER MURRAY. "IF I HAD EVER IMAGINED THAT ANYONE COULD HAVE BEEN HURT," HE SAID, "...I WOULD NEVER, EVEN IF IT HAD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COST ME ANONYMOUS DEATH AT YUGOSLAV HANDS, EMBARKED ON THAT FLIGHT."

--- MRS. BUSIC ALSO ADDRESSED THE BENCH YESTERDAY BEFORE SENTENCE WAS PRONOUNCED, DEVOTING MOST OF HER HALF-HOUR TALK TO AN ATTACK ON YUGOSLAVIA AND ELEMENTS OF THE PRESS.

--- "I ACCUSE YUGOSLAVIA OF RUINING THE LIVES OF TWO PEOPLE WHO HAD NEVER HARMED ANYONE," SHE SAID IN LOUD CLEAR TONES THAT RANG THROUGH THE COURTROOM CROWDED WITH CROATIAN SYMPATHIZERS.

---- HUSBAND'S ROLE DEFENDED

--- BEFORE THAT, MRS. BUSIC HAD EXPRESSED DEEP REGRET OVER THE ENTIRE INCIDENT, ADDING: "I THINK IT'S SAFE TO SAY THAT IF I WEREN'T MARRIED TO A MAN CARRYING TOO HEAVY A WEIGHT FOR ONE PERSON, I WOULDN'T BE HERE TODAY AT ALL."

--- A FEW MOMENTS LATER, JUDGE BARTELS EXPRESSED THE

SAME VIEW. "WHILE THE ANALOGY IS NOT COMPLETE,"
JUDGE BARTELS ADDED, "ZVONKO BUSIC'S INFLUENCE OVER
HER (MRS. BUSIC) REMINDS ONE OF THE HYPNOTISM THAT
SVENGALI EXERCISED OVER TRILBY O'FERRALL."

--- SHORTLY AFTER THE SENTENCES WERE ANNOUNCED, MICHAEL
TIGAR, THE LAWYER FOR MR. BUSIC SAID HE WOULD APPEAL.
AND EDWARD KORMAN, CHIEF ASSISTANT UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT, SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD
APPEAL JUDGE BARTELS'S DECISION TO ALLOW MRS. BUSIC
TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR PAROLE AFTER EIGHT YEARS.

--- THE LAWYERS FOR THE DEFENDANTS ASKED THEN IF THEIR
CLIENTS COULD REMAIN IN THE METROPOLITAN CORRECTION
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CENTER UNTIL OCTOBER, WHEN HEARINGS ARE SCHEDULED ON
STATE CHARGES OF MURDER IN THE SECOND DEGREE AGAINST
THE COUPLE.

--- IF THAT WERE NOT POSSIBLE, THE LAWYERS ASKED,
COULD THE BUSICS THEN BE SENTENCED TO SERVE AT TERMINAL
ISLAND, A FEDERAL INSTITUTION IN CALIFORNIA FOR BOTH
MEN AND WOMEN. END TEXT.

2. REGARDING YOUR QUESTION (REF A) ABOUT BAIL, IT
WAS GRANTED BUT WAS SET AT \$1 MILLION PER DEFENDANT,
WHICH NONE COULD MEET. THE JUDGE DENIED AT LEAST
ONE MOTION FOR REDUCTION OF BAIL (REF B), AND THE
DEFENDANTS REMAINED IN CUSTODY THROUGHOUT.

3. ADDITIONAL INFO TO FOLLOW AS RECEIVED. VANCE

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